



VALLEYS

Valleys: The Valley of Weeping

May 2nd & 3rd

Speaker: Pastor Joel Schmidgall

Scripture: Psalm 84:5-7

Series Overview

We love mountaintops, but the valleys are where faith is forged, vision is revealed, and breakthroughs happen. It's in the valleys of life that His presence is made real and His power is made perfect. During this series, we'll navigate the valley of giants, the valley of shadows, the valley of decision, the valley of heartbreak, and the valley of vision. It's in the valley that we discover who we are, and more importantly, who God is.

Series Discussion Questions

How have some of the valleys you've experienced shaped who you are today?
How have they shaped your understanding of God?

Message Overview

Have you ever gone through a season of life that has broken you? A season that drained your energy, tested your resolve, or wore you out? Today, we want to talk about a place called "Baka." It literally means weeping. It was a point on the journey of pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the ancient middle east. We'll unpack Psalm 84:5-7 to learn how to not just go to Baka, but to go through it. We have something to learn in that place. We have strength to gain. We have something to give. Don't discount God's purposes at work, even in the hard places!

In addition to the message, Dr. Kerley Most, psychotherapist and Capitol Hill NCC'er, helps us to navigate the valleys with the help of her professional counseling background. [Check out this week's video](#) for how you can be present with someone suffering sorrow and how to differentiate between the stages of sorrow and despair. You can pass this video along to your group members, or watch it together when you meet.

Message-Specific Discussion Questions

If you could go anywhere right now, where would it be?

Take a moment of silence and reflect on a Valley of Baka – a place of pain you have walked through – from your past. From that season, what revelations did you have about who God is? What revelations did you have about who you are?

“To get to Zion, you have to go through Baka. To get to the mountaintop, you have to go through the valley. To get to praise, you have to go through pain.” Do you believe God can use this season more than any other season? Is there anything you have already been learning from God?

In [this video](#), Dr. Most shares how to differentiate between feelings of sorrow and despair. “Sorrow always has hope. You go to God and community. With despair, you feel so much that you go away from God and community.” How have you been going to God and community in this season?

Pastor Joel outlined three ways to get through Baka:

1. Strengthen yourself in the Lord (Psalm 84:5)
2. Know your destination (Psalm 84:5)
3. Dig a well (Psalm 84:5-6)

What does it look like to strengthen yourself in the Lord in this season?

What are some destinations you can see out ahead of this season? What are some creative ways to keep your eyes fixed on what’s ahead? What are some creative ways to keep your eyes fixed on your final destination of the dwelling place, the courts, and the house of the Lord (Psalm 84:1-4)?

What wells are you digging in this current season? Do you believe that God can give you joy, peace, strength, and more in the middle of it? What keeps you from believing that and what is one step you can make towards opening yourself to receive His joy, peace, strength, and love?

Practical Application

- In this [video](#), Dr. Most shares how we can be present and listen to others as they experience sorrow. As you have conversations with others this week, pay attention to the words they use, offer a summary of what they say, and create space for them to share more if they would like.

- Every fear is a call to prayer. Select a verse from Scripture to pray through every time you experience fear this week. Consider 2 Corinthians 12:10 or Psalm 30:5. Remember Pastor Joel's encouragement: "We are going to get there."
- Isaiah 40:31 says, "but those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength." Find the most comfortable chair in your house and find as much time as you can to sit in the chair, in the Lord's presence, this week. Set a timer for 5 minutes and quiet yourself and receive His strength. Say to the Lord, "Here I am Lord, I'm here to renew my strength in You. I receive Your strength in my body, soul, and spirit."
- Access a curated list of mental and emotional health resources to help you dig a well for yourself and for others at ncc.re/covidcare.
- Consider joining Pastor Mark and the church for a 40-Day Prayer Challenge by kneeling and praying at 7:14am each morning. Sign up at ncc.re/pray.